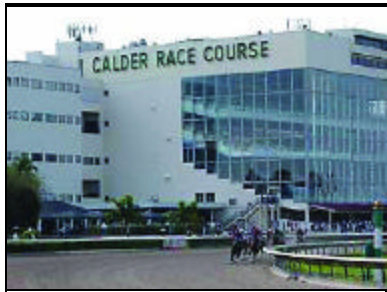




Serving The South Florida Community



Dolphin Stadium



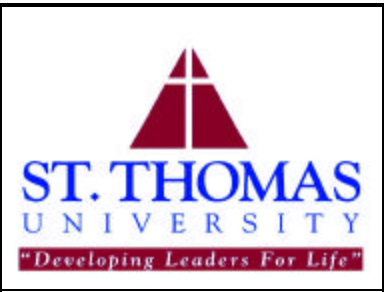
Calder Race Course



Arch at Sunshine International Park



Florida Memorial University



St. Thomas University

City of Miami Commissioner, Spence-Jones Scores A Win For Her District



**US REP. KENDRICK MEEK
INQUIRY INTO MIAMI
VETERAN HEALTHCARE
Page 8**



**BBEO NATIONAL HONOREE
SHERYL LEE RALPH
Pages 3**



**DELANYHILL P.A. HONORS
FORMER COMM. FERGUSON
Pages 7**



MIAMI - City of Miami Commissioners have unanimously voted to take the first steps toward securing potentially up to a half billion dollars over twenty years in financing for the redevelopment of Overtown/Park West. Funds would be obtained by bonding out the revenues of the Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

At today's city commission meeting the city's chief financial officer estimated that over \$100 million in bonds could be issued within one year. In response, city commissioners unanimously directed Miami's city

manager to begin the process. Use of these funds would be restricted to eliminating slum and blight in Overtown/Park West.

Earlier, sitting as the CRA Board, Miami City Commissioners adopted a finding of Necessity Study that would result in the expansion of the CRA boundaries. The next step is for the City of Miami to review the study and forward it to Miami-Dade County to approve the expansion and extension of the life of the CRA.

According to Commissioner Spence-Jones, "these findings demonstrate what we already know - there is considerable slum and blight

surrounding the existing redevelopment boundaries that must be addressed if we are to be successful in revitalizing Overtown/Park West. If we can support the major projects slated for downtown Miami, then we can do the same for the areas that have the most need."

She went on to state: "I am pleased with the support shown by my colleagues and hope that the City and Miami-Dade County will quickly follow the actions of the CRA and demonstrate their commitment to seeing Overtown and Park West revitalized as a cultural destination where businesses and families thrive."

READ MORE NEWS ON PAGE 19

Business.....Page 6 & 23
 Church Directory & Announcement.....Page 9
 Community Information & Event...Pages 4, 5, 16, & 20
 Entertainment & Travel.....Page 22
 Asian News & PictorialPage 10 & 11

Publisher's Message.....Page 2
 Family Page / PTS/PTSA INFO.....Page 17
 Caribbean Information.....Pages 14 & 15
 EventsPages 10, 12,13, 19 & 24
 Real Estate & AUTO.....Page 21



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THE MIAMI GARDENS OBSERVER, WOULD LIKE TO THANK THEIR SPONSORS, ADVERTISERS AND READERS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

INFORMATON

Publisher's Message



**Leona Minto
Publisher**

Dear Readers,

In this New Year of Hope, I can only see all of us doing our Best along with Barack Obama. We need to make the commitment and promise to do

our fair share and to give a helping hand to our brothers and sisters. Obama alone, can not make this country better, he needs us to work with him and for us to do the right thing.

We have dropped the torch passed on to us by Martin Luther King Jr. and all the civil right activists for our kids. Now is the time to take a stand, this New Year of Hope. Education is

one of the best things that we truly pass on to our kids. With education, we can build a better tomorrow and a better future. Let us all take a stand now with Obama and pick up that torch, it is not too late, lets fight for our kids to have a good education and to keep them out of the system. It is not too late.

My wish for this New Year and time of Hope is that everyone, will find a cause to fight for, so that we can all make a difference for our future and for our kids future.

Keep the dream alive, just like Martin Luther King Jr. and now Barack Obama.

Blessings to all our readers.

Leona Minto
Publisher

Mayor and City Council



Mayor
Shirley Gibson
Citywide (305) 622-8000
sgibson@miamigardens-fl.gov

Councilmember
Aaron Campbell, Jr.
(305) 622-8000
acampbell@miamigardens-fl.gov

Vice-Mayor
Barbara Watson
(305) 622-8000
bwatson@miamigardens-fl.gov

Councilmember
Andre L. Williams
(305) 622-8000
awilliams@miamigardens-fl.gov

Councilmember
Melvin L. Bratton
(305) 622-8000
mbratton@miamigardens-fl.gov

Councilmember
Sharon Pritchett
(305) 622-8000
spritchett@miamigardens-fl.gov

Councilmember
Oliver G. Gilbert
(305) 622-8000
ogilbert@miamigardens-fl.gov

The City of Miami Gardens has a Mayor-Council-Manager form of government. Under this form of government, the elected City Council sets policies for the operation of the City. The City Council enacts Ordinances, the laws of the City, adopts Resolutions authorizing actions on behalf of the City, reviews plans for development, and establishes the policies by which the City is governed.

The City Council consists of seven members: a Mayor and two Council members elected city-wide and four additional Council members elected by individual districts. The administrative responsibility of the City rests with the City Manager, who is appointed by the City Council (upon recommendation of the Mayor). Each Councilmember is elected to a four-year term.

Miami Gardens Observer Can be picked up at these locations

All the churches listed in the Church Directory

In most City Hall

Most Caribbean Restaurant and Grocery Stores
(From South Miami to Palm Beach)

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5735 Pembroke Road (near 441),
Hollywood, FL 33023

Tropical Oasis Restaurant,
20737 NW 2nd Ave.,
Miami Gardens (441 Plaza)

NANAY Community Center
659 NE 125 Street,
North Miami, FL 33161.

North Dade Regional Library
NW 183rd & NW 25 Ave,
Miami Gardens, FL

B & S Top Notch Grocery
18154 NW 2nd Ave,
Miami Gardens, FL 33169

MANDELL CHIROPRACTIC
20334 NW 2nd Ave,
Miami Gardens, FL 33169

Malano Furniture
18320 NW 7th Ave,
Miami Gardens, FL 33169

Paul's Electronics
Parts and Service
475 NE 167th Street,
North Miami Beach, FL 33162

AFRO-IN BOOKS AND CAFE
5575 NW 7TH Ave, Miami

N.A.N.A.
180 NW 62nd Street
Miami, FL 33150

WIFF
3628 Grand Aveune
Coconut Grove

CNS Insurance Group Inc., 6264
Miramar Parkway,
Miramar, FL 33023

LIGNUM VITAE
ENTERTAINMENT
2318 SW 60th Terrace
Miramar, FL 33023

VP Records
6022 SW 21st Street,
Miramar, FL 33023

Morgan's E-File
4111 Sterling Road,
Davie, FL

African-American Research
Library and Cultural Center,
2650 NW Sistrunk Blvd,
Fort Lauderdale.

Marcia's Café,
Caribbean Restaurant & Lounge,
3750 North State Road 7 (441),
Lauderdale Lakes, FL 33319

OCHO RIOS
3675 NW 17ST STREET
Miam, Florida
Bay #3, Pembroke Pine

This community newspaper is to delivered to homes and businesses in the Miami Gardens and the surrounding areas. North Miami, North Miami Beach, Opa-Locka, Miami Lakes, Miramar, Hollywood, Adventura, Lauderhill, Lauderdale Lakes, Plus

A PDF format of the Miami Gardens Observer is available online at www.miamigardensobserver.com

We would like to thank these locations ,our sponsors, advertisers and our readers for their all there support.

GO ONLING AND HELP US PICK THE BEST EVENTS, NEWS AND INFORMATION TO PUBLISH IN OUR NEXT ISSUE, EMAIL US INFO@MIAMIGARDENSOBSERVER.COM YOUR COMMENTS ARE WELCOME

ADDITION LOCATION WILL BE ADDED ON IN OUR UPCOMING ISSUE AND LISTED ONLINE

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Olivia S. Benson, Esq.
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3350 S.W. 148th Ave.
Suite 110
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**THE MIAMI GARDENS OBSERVER NEWSPAPER
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Miami Gardens Observer

Serving The South Florida Community
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SOUTH FLORIDA PICTORIAL

BROWARD BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS FOURTH ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY GALA 2009

(Photos by Don Parchment - more photos online @ www.miamigardensobserver.com)



Dionne Warwick - National Honoree Presented by US State Rep. Hazelle Rogers



Check from the BBEO to the United Negro College Received by Dr. Karl Wright (President of FMUUniv)



Check from PBS&J to the BBEO Scholarship Fund Presented by Clarence Anthony to Vice Mayor Benson Jr.



(L-R)Member of the Seminole Hard Rock Entertainment, Inc Presenting the BBEO Special Award to Nicki Grossman with Commissioner Margaret Bates (Lauderhill)



Receiving the Corporate Honor (center in blue) was Clarence Anthony CMO of PBS&J surrounded by some of the Broward Black Elected Officials



Receiving Corporate Honor was Yolanda Jackson & Becker & Poliakoff Presented by US State Rep. Joseph Gibbon



Receiving the Community Honors Award was Dennis Wright (center) presented by Calvin Hughes from WPLG- Channel 10



Receiving the National Honor Award was Sheryl Lee Ralph Presenter Dr. Brenda Snipes



Both Retired Congresswoman Carrie Meek and her son Congressman Kendrick Meek received the Political Honorees Award from two of the BBEO

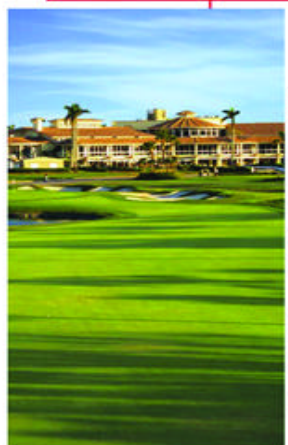


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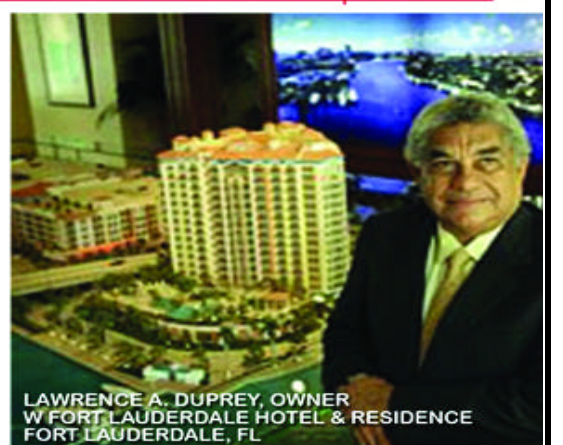
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MIAMI GARDENS COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan Hosts Informational Sessions on Marlins Stadium Bidding Opportunities For Local Businesses



Miami-Dade County Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan (at podium) and David Samson (right), Florida Marlins President, address hundreds of business representatives interested in bidding contracts for the potential Marlins Stadium project.

(Miami-Dade County, FL) -- Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan hosted two information sessions on Thursday, March 12, 2009 regarding opportunities for small business owners in the event the Marlins Stadium contract is approved by the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County. The sessions were held at Florida Memorial University, with approximately 350 people total in attendance. David Samson, President of the Florida Marlins, and other representatives from the team and Hunt/Moss, construction manager, addressed both companies registered as part of the Miami-Dade Community Small Business Enterprise (CSBE) and other

companies interested in becoming certified on bidding opportunities.

"Both the County and City of Miami still have to cast their votes on the fate of the Marlins Stadium, but it's important that we give small businesses and construction companies a chance to prepare should this project become a reality," said Commissioner Jordan. "We need to give these companies a 'heads up' to take advantage of any job opportunities that may come their way."

Currently, the City of Miami is scheduled to vote on the Marlins Stadium contract on March 19. The Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners is scheduled to vote on the project on March 23.

Young Volunteers Nurture "Green" Projects



Recycling, animal conservancy and landscaping projects flourished with the help of Miami Job Corps Center (MJCC) youth in 2008.

In the fall of 2008, the center bridged alliances with an animal conservation program in South Florida's Redlands. Home to monkeys that once aided medical research for blindness, the Dumond Conservancy now serves as a refuge for these animals. Volunteers from Miami Job Corps Landscaping program planted fruit trees and a large vegetable garden for the monkeys. The project came to fruition through MJCC's alliance with United Way of Miami Dade's Hands on Miami, which is the largest volunteer service agency in all of South Florida. Throughout the year the conservancy also benefits from its volunteer partnerships with The University of Miami and South Ridge High School.

conscious retailer channels its proceeds from donated building materials sales into its humanitarian home building initiatives. The Restore benefits from volunteers, such as skilled helpers from Miami Job Corps Carpentry program. "Habitat does so many good things in the community, we were glad to step in and unload boxes, organize merchandise and help out with deliveries," said Aleyda Rodriguez, MJCC's Carpentry Instructor."

Closer to home, MJCC's Landscaping and Facilities Maintenance program youth had the chance to make an important in the very area where they live and attend school. The volunteers spent 2 days at the City of Miami Gardens Police department (CMGPD) landscaping and beautifying the building's exteriors this past winter. With CMGPD recently established in December of 2007, the project spotlighted this law enforcements new presence in the Miami Gardens community.



This past spring, Miami Job Corps had its youth rolling up their sleeves once again; this time for the cause of aiding the Habitat for Humanity Restore of Greater Miami. This socially

Job Corps Community Service Projects like these are pillars for community development. Beyond offering hands on vocational training for youth with cost free labor to non profit/government agencies, they are essential for building lasting community alliances.

The Miami Job Corps Center provides GED, High School Diploma and Career Technical Training Programs to youth ages 16-24. To find out more about enrollment, hiring our students or building partnerships, visit our website at miami.jobcorps.gov. For the Office of Business Community Liaison, contact Lori Trujillo (305) 620-3125.



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MIAMI GARDENS PICTORIAL & NEWS

CITY OF MIAMI GARDENS 2ND ANNUAL MLK PERFORMANCE POETRY COMPETITION



1st Place Winner
Peter Hargitai
(center)

2nd Place winner
Devon Dassaw
(right)

3rd Place winner
Alexis Caputo
(left)

This year the City of Miami Gardens kicked off their Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration "Unity in the Community" with their Second Annual MLK performance Poetry Competition, theme: "How I can make my neighborhood even better" on Thursday Jan. 15, 2009, at North Dade Regional Library, NW 183rd & NW 25 Ave. The Poetry Competition chaired by Shamele Jenkins.

The competitors ranged from teenagers 18 and up from the Miami Job Corps Center to Professors from Universities and from first time performers to seasoned performers. The event was well attended and included the Mayor Shirley Gibson along with council members, Sharon Pritchett and Oliver Gilbert.

The judges had their job cut out for them as each contestant went up and did an excellent job. The competi-

tion started off with strong and powerful performance from Alexis Caputo and the momentum built from there but when Peter Hargitai went up and started his poem the room became silent and it seemed as if you could hear a pin drop in the room, his poetry was definitely intense. Peter's poem was about his mom and her bigotry. Yes, Peter Hargitai was their 1st place winner, 2nd place, Devon Dassaw and 3rd place went to Alexis Caputo.

Keep an eye out for our next issue as we do an interview with the winner and see if he will let us publish his poem in our next issue. The MLK Celebration continued with the 3rd Annual Oratorical Contest on January 17, and ended with their 5th Annual MLK Holiday Celebration at Miami Carol City Park, 3201 NW 185th Street on January 19th, 2009

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March thru April, 2009 contest information.
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Mail your recipe entries to: Miami Gardens Observer, 5735 Pembroke Road, Hollywood FL 33023
Deadline for recipe entry: April 30th 2009
Winner will be notified by phone.
Please include your Name, Address and Phone number on your entry.

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MGO BUSINESS NEWS & INFORMATION

ACCESS Miami Jobs is Dedicated to Helping Residents Find Jobs

Free Website Features Thousands of Jobs, Averages 30,000 Visitors a Month

(Miami, FL) To help the residents of Miami during these difficult economic times, ACCESS Miami offers a one stop site for jobseekers. The Access Miami Jobs website (www.accessmiamijobs.com) is updated daily, with a database holding over 8,000 employment opportunities. The website receives close to 30,000 unique visitors a month, who can have access to the employment opportunities at no charge.

The site also services employers, who are taking advantage of the opportunity and posting their available positions for free. Unlike other job sites, ACCESS Miami does not charge for its services. In addition, job seekers can also upload their resumes to the website for potential employers.

"This is another great tool Miami's residents can use to empower themselves financially," said Mayor Manny Diaz. "It is in times just like

these that we encourage our residents to take advantage of these free services."

Launched in 2001 by Mayor Manny Diaz, ACCESS Miami is the City of Miami's Anti-Poverty Initiative, and encompasses the year-round programs and services the City offers its residents in order to empower them with access to the financial tools and education that are fundamental to economic prosperity.

To date, ACCESS Miami has established numerous collaborations with high-profile partners, working with each on a one-on-one basis to offer opportunities for City residents year-round, including financial seminars, workshops, free tax preparation, workforce initiatives, small-business loans and more.

To explore all of the opportunities available, please visit www.accessmiamijobs.com.

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Faith Medical Institute

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Margaret DaCosta Dallas
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Miami entrepreneur Basil L. Dallas, Sr. and wife Margaret-DaCosta-Dallas have teamed up to start the couple's most ambitious venture to date - Faith Medical Institute d.b.a. FMI Career School. As a successful accountant and tax practitioner, Dallas migrated from Jamaica several years ago and started his business consultation practice in New York before settling in the Miami Gardens community. Margaret has served as the director of nursing at some of Florida's most reputable institutions and has also served as nursing instructor at other institutions before embarking on their Faith project.

After his marriage to Maggie over a decade ago, the industrious couple has dabbled in many areas of investment, including real estate and the stock market. Dallas boasts that his most valuable lifetime venture is his investment is building relationships. His wife, Maggie, is a nursing instructor who has dedicated her weekends helping many South Florida community healthcare students prepare for their rigorous nurs-

ing exams; students from as far away as West Palm Beach. Her inspiration for the Faith institution grew out of her passion and care for those students who needed a mentor to assist them in fulfilling their healthcare career goals. She offers individual tutoring at no charge and inspires her students with a parental passion and confidence.

Faith Medical Institute recently opened its doors in the North Miami Beach area and offers programs instruction in basic healthcare with a pending license to expand into the full nursing programs. Many of the current students, who are unable to secure financing for their studies, receive private financial aid offered by the institution. The institute is located at 2040 NE 163rd Street in North Miami Beach and welcomes students from all walks of life and caters especially to the Caribbean community. The institution's creed is "Passion Driven; Care Guided", in the hope that all who have the desire will find a place at FMI Career School to grow and succeed. Further highlights can be found on the FMI's website:

www.faimedicalinstitute.com

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FIRST SUNDAY NETWORKING (SUCCESS BUILDERS)

Got a "Grace Moment" to share? Have you experienced something awesome in your life, that, as you look back, you recognize, "BUT God"...

Sunday Morning Success Builders meet every first Sunday. Hosted by Carol and Michael Hope from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at 2040 N.E. 163rd Street (first floor), North Miami Beach, Florida 33162 (parking and entrance in the rear)

Join us for an entertaining and life transforming occasion, packed with Biblical strategies for living, feeding the spirit, business networking and fellowship.

Exhibit your business, product, book, service or enjoy great food, make new friends and be blessed. **Contact Michael and Carol Hope for details. Call 786-337-5965 Do It Today!!! Space is limited, so reserve your spot NOW!**

God Bless, Frank and Blondie Clayton

The Minority Chamber of Commerce, invite you to attend the Greater Miami Youth Chamber Event:

When: Saturday, March 28, 2009
Where: The Miami Free Zone / 2305 NW 107th Avenue, Doral, FL
Time: 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Mission:
The goal of the job fair is to bring Employment Opportunities in all type of industry to the attention of talented and motivated candidates and creating a diverse workforce is a must in order to remain competitive in the Global Economy regardless of industry.

Goals:
Simplifying our Diversity Job Fair it's a recruitment effort while putting qualified people to work in this difficult time, so we help companies to accelerate growth and the economy to prosper. Companies save money and time in their recruitment efforts and open doors for highly qualified applicants from our Communities.

For Exhibitions and more information:
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SOUTH FLORIDA NEWS & INFORMATION

DELANCYHILL P.A. HONORS FORMER COMMISSIONER BETTY T. FERGUSON AT 5TH ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Former Commissioner Betty Ferguson and Marlon Hill Esq.



Irvin Headley making presentation to Commissioner Betty Ferguson



(L-R) Delancyhill Associates, Michelle Delancy and guests



Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson presenting Jazz in the Gardens VIP tickets to Comm. Ferguson, Michelle Delancy (center)



(L-R) Tyrone Robertson, Cherly Winters, Peter Webley, Jamaica Consul General Sandra Grant-Griffiths and Eddy Edwards



Rev. Mary Tumkin (UTC) and Susan McDowell, President/CEO of Circle of One Marketing

On Friday February 27, 2009, at its 5th annual celebration for Black History Month, delancyhill P.A., in collaboration with the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF), the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, as part of the HMSF preview of the Black Crossroads: The African Diaspora in Miami exhibition, honored former county commissioner Betty T. Ferguson for inspiring change, community engagement and building bridges in the African Diaspora of South Florida. The invitation-only reception and preview hosted clients, firm partners,

Visitors Bureau members and community leaders at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida located at 101 W. Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33130.

This commemorative 5th year celebration of Black History Month inspired the law firm of delancyhill, P.A. to create the award of Firm Partner Star, previously offered to Ruth Shack, Dorothy Jenkins-Fields, David Wilson, and Babacar M'Bow for their contributions to uplifting African-American communities of South Florida.

"The recent election of our 44th President, Barack Obama,

reminds us of the personal power that one citizen can make when engaged in their local communities. We are inspired by Commissioner Ferguson's passion for community engagement and elevating our voice to the highest level of government," stated Marlon A. Hill, partner, delancyhill.

This year's honoree, Betty Ferguson, is a community organizer, educator, and former county commissioner for Miami-Dade County. As the founder of UP-PAC (Unrepresented Peoples Positive Action Council), over twenty years ago, Commissioner Ferguson has been a catalyst for

political and economic empowerment in South Florida's Black community by inspiring change at the grassroots level. Every Saturday morning at 9 a.m., UP-PAC faithfully meets at Greater New Bethel Baptist Church for lively debates, while seeking answers to challenging community questions and finding actionable solutions for community needs.

"In 2009, we will be recommitting ourselves to the core values of America. As a friend and community partner to our Firm, we are moved by the spark of Ferguson's work and accomplishments, commented Michelle A. Delancy, managing partner of delancyhill.

MIA HOSTS FIRST TERMINAL-WIDE BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION



The Miami-Dade Transit singing group "Expressions" performs during MIA's Black History Month program at Terminal E.



The Miami Norland Senior High School Precious Pearls Dance Troupe performs during MIA's Black History Month program at Terminal E.

Miami-Dade County, FL - On Friday, February 20, Miami International Airport (MIA) employees shared their Seventh Annual Black History Month celebration with airport passengers this year for the first time, hosting a terminal-wide program that included African-American entertainment, food, clothing and arts and crafts to commemorate the special month and raise funds for the Miami-Dade Aviation Department's United Way campaign.

Featured performers included: nationally renowned spoken-word artists South Dade Connection; the Miami Norland Senior High School Precious Pearls Dance Troupe; and the Miami-Dade Transit Expressions Choir.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY: Greg Chin, Media Relations Manager Miami-Dade Aviation Department

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SOUTH FLORIDA NEWS & INFORMATION



U.S. Rep. Kendrick B. Meek (D-FL) Calls for Full Inquiry into Medical Mistakes at the Miami Veterans Affairs Healthcare Center



U.S. Rep. Kendrick B. Meek

MIAMI GARDENS, FL - On March 23, the Miami Veterans Affairs Healthcare System (MVAHS) notified Congressman Kendrick Meek that between May 2004 and March 12, 2009 approximately 3,260 veterans who received a colonoscopy using endoscopic equipment at the Miami VA were exposed to possible risks of hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV.

This occurred because attached tubing to the colonoscopy equipment was apparently not serviced and sterilized according to the manufacturer's guidelines. Approximately 2,500 former patients are believed to be in the Miami area and letters are being mailed today to those veterans asking them to under-

go tests at the Miami VA Medical Center, the Broward County VA Clinic, the Homestead VA Clinic and the Key West VA Clinic.

Upon learning of the situation this morning, Congressman Kendrick B. Meek (D-FL) spoke with Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Mary Berrocal, Director of the Miami VA Healthcare System to learn the latest facts of the situation, thank them for their renewed effort, and also recommend that a regional, statewide and if need be, a national door to door campaign be adopted to notify the veterans that their health status may be comprised because of the procedure they underwent. Rep. Meek also requested an Official Inquiry into the matter by Mr. George Opfer, Inspector General of the VA in Washington, DC.

"Given the awful circumstances, the Miami VA Healthcare system has acted expeditiously to notify veterans of this personal health and public health danger. Needless to say, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV are communicable and what may affect as many as 3,260 individuals could quickly expand to include a

much larger pool of people. While we can never adequately pay back our veterans for their service to our country and dedication to the uniform they wore, we can try to assist by providing them with the top level of medical care they deserve. The VA is a model of the type of healthcare we provide our veterans and when mistakes like this occur, it undermines the efficacy of the entire system," said Rep. Meek in his letter to the Inspector General of the VA in Washington, DC.

"Infection control is a critical concern for patients, as well as healthcare workers. Infection control measures are designed to combat everything from the spread of colds and flu to hepatitis B and C, SARS, HIV/AIDS, and other potentially life threatening diseases. That, somehow, these standard protocols were not followed will undoubtedly leave our veterans with serious misgivings about our VA system despite everything you've done in a very short time to give them renewed confidence. I know you are acting quickly to find and test the 3,260 patients. We share in the hope that these veterans are found to be healthy and safe," said Rep. Meek in his letter to VA Secretary Shinseki.

The MVAHS has set up a Special Care Call Center that is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Veterans may call (305) 575-7256 or toll free 1(877) 575-7256 to speak with health care staff who will be available to answer their questions and schedule an appointment for either blood test screening or to see a provider. Additionally, the MVAHS has established a Special Care Program which includes an information center which includes an information center and Special Care Clinics that are available at the Miami VA Medical Center, the Broward County VA Clinic, the Homestead VA Clinic and the Key West VA Clinic. If the veteran is located outside South Florida, the MVAHS will arrange for them to receive service at a VA facility most convenient to them. Wherever veterans receive service related to this issue, there will be no co-payment associated with the appointment or testing.

U.S. Rep. Kendrick B. Meek represents the 17th Congressional District of Florida which includes parts of Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. He serves as the lone Democratic Floridian sitting on the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Historic Virginia Key Beach Park Trust Hosts Youth "Green" Festival



Young and old alike who crave the outdoor life should mark their calendars for the ultimate green celebration; the Fun in the Sun Youth Festival (a.k.a. "FISY") scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2009, Noon-8PM, amidst the lush environment of the City of Miami's foremost recreational facility, Historic Virginia Key Beach Park, 4020 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami FL (across from Miami Seaquarium).

Focusing on health, well-being and eco-friendly initiatives, a target audience of several thousand 6-17 year-olds, accompanied by their families and friends, are expected to converge on 82.5 acres of open beach/park for a day packed with good times, food, arts & crafts, lively entertainment hosted by celebrity guests and plenty of free give-a-ways.

The expanding list of exciting family activities will include; Karaoke/Dance-dance Revolution contests, Wii-fit/sports video games contests, scavenger/geo-caching hunts, Fresh Farmer's Market, eco-friendly Sea grass adventures, demonstrations in cooking, planting, recycling crafts, rock wall climbing, giant water slides, yoga on the great lawn, and special lounges furnished with massage/natural spa-like amenities to name just a few.

At press time, the roster of sponsors include The Children's Trust, City of Miami Sustainable Initiatives, Green Art USA, The Big Blue & You Foundation, SeePr, Biscayne Nature Center and Miami Dade County. Whether you are interested in green technologies that will preserve the earth, guided tours through the park's Historical Zone, exploring "green" eats and crafts vendors or, simply, basking in the sun along a glorious mile-long shoreline, the public is invited to get "FISY" at Historic Virginia Key Beach's premiere Fun in the Sun Youth Festival.

For more information or vending inquiries, call 305-960-4600 or log on to www.VirginiaKeyBeachpark.net.

Commissioner Joe A. Martinez Unveils "Ashley Valdes Street" to Honor Local Girl Killed in Hit-and-Run Accident



(Miami-Dade County, FL) -- Surrounded by Ashley Nicole Valdes' family and friends, Commissioner Joe A. Martinez unveiled "Ashley Valdes Street" on Wednesday, March 4, 2009 at the southeast corner of SW 152 Avenue and SW 80 Street. A portion of SW 80 Street between SW 147 Avenue and SW 152 Avenue was named after the 11-year-old girl who was killed in a hit-and-run accident this past January. The ceremony took place on what would have been Ashley's twelfth birthday.

Ashley's story made local headlines when she was struck and killed by a pick-up truck while walking home from an after-school program on January 8, 2009. After an eight-day search and dozens of tips from concerned residents, police were able to identify the suspect and arrest him. Although her death was untimely, Ashley had already touched the lives of many in her neighborhood. She was a source of help for her mother, Adonay Rosete, who was a single mother and

studying to be a paramedic. When not in school, Ashley spent much of her time taking care of her younger sister Amanda, who is mentally disabled. She was also very involved in school activities, and was known for her love of animals.

Ashley's death sparked a new Miami-Dade alert system on January 21, 2009. County Mayor Carlos A. Alvarez joined Commission Vice-Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz and the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) Director Robert Parker to announce the launch of the Ashley Nicole Valdes Public Safety Alerts program, which notifies subscribers of current public safety events in which community assistance is being sought. Text alerts can be instantaneously sent to any cell phone or mobile device with information on crimes that just occurred, major events that involve multiple road closures, or child abductions. Anyone can sign up for the text alerts online at www.miamidade.gov/oem.

"This was an emotional day for Ashley's family and residents in this neighborhood," said Commissioner Martinez. "My heart goes out to her loved ones. While they can never get Ashley back, I hope they take some comfort that her name will serve as a reminder to drive safely."

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CHURCH & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Miss Jamaica Florida A 20-Year Legacy of Glamour

Ft. Lauderdale, FL - The Miss Jamaica Florida Pageant committee is searching for confident, and intelligent young women to continue a 20-year legacy of glamour and professionalism as crowned Ambassadors wearing the titles of Little Miss, Junior Miss, Miss Teen, and Miss Jamaica Florida.

Contestants ages 5- 21, will compete in four age categories for a coveted title at a Coronation Ceremony on the evening of Sunday, June 28, 2009, at the Coral Springs Center for the Arts in Coral Springs, FL. As part of the pageant, contestants are required to showcase their talents through creative expression, followed by a question and answer segment during a live interview on the evening of the Coronation.

The Pageant was started in 1990 by the late Anthony Baker and has since been sustained by Macia Rigg-Baker and the Board of Directors for The Partners for Youth Foundation, a charitable, non-profit organization. This pageant is the annual fundraiser for The Partners for Youth Foundation. The Foundation is committed to the enhancement of children internationally, and recognition of young women in the area of the Performing Arts in the tri-counties of Broward, Dade and Palm Beach by offering scholarships to stu-

dents enrolled in a US tertiary institution majoring in Theater or Music.

The crowned Ambassadors will receive a four-day all expenses paid trip to Jamaica, where they will meet with government officials and participate in humanitarian projects adopted by the Partners for Youth Foundation. The trip will also include visits to famous tourist attractions and national landmarks across the island.

The Miss Jamaica Florida Pageant is a great experience for young women of Jamaican descent, who are residents of the State Florida to become involved in their community through networking opportunities, local cultural activities, and educational and charitable programs. The contestants will become empowered through leadership and social interaction skills to increase their self-development.

Applications are available now at

www.MissJamaicaFlorida.com

The application deadline is March 28, 2009.

Interested applicants can also interact with past Ambassadors on the Miss Jamaica Florida profile page Facebook or Myspace.

Daily Word, World Peace

With hearts united in love, we bless our world and envision peace for all people.

There is a new world continually unfolding, and each day is one of renewed faith. With God as our all-knowing, ever-present partner, we act on divine guidance to further world peace.

One by one, right where we are, we take individual peace-centered actions that create a convergence of harmony. We are patient in traffic or in customer waiting lines. We are understanding of one another's feelings. We listen before offering our own input and suggestions. We contribute our

time or material gifts to those in need of assistance. Each thought, word, and action is a demonstration of peace and harmony.

Throughout the world, with like-minded hearts and souls, we link our prayers and love to bless all people of the world.

"While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'"
- Luke 24:36

Inspired by this message? Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you'll find prayerful support with Silent Unity. Visit Silent Unity online today or call 1-800-NOW-PRAY (669-7729).



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CHURCH DIRECTORY

ANTIOCH Missionary Baptist Church of Carol City

21311 NW 34th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33056
Phone: 305-624-8170

Grace United Community Church Inc.

Bishop Dennis Archibald
Sunday - 10:45 am & 6:00 pm Services
Wednesday - 8:00 pm Bible Study
Friday - 8:00 pm Youth Fellowship
901 NW 183rd Street
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-651-1446

Harvest Fire Worship Center

2260 NW 183rd Street
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-620-2986

Parkway Baptist Church

18000 NW 18th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-621-8491

Holy Family Episcopal Church

Rev. Horace Ward
Services:
Sundays - 8:00am, and 10:00am
Wednesday at 7:15pm
18501 NW 7th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-652-6797

Miami Gardens Church of Christ

2265 NW 183rd Street
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-625-0688

Norland United Methodist Church

885 NW 195th Street
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-652-5172

Norland Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Senior Pastor: Dr. Creaton Francis
1175 NW 183 Street
Miami Garden, FL 33169
Phone: 305- 651-7722

North Dade Community Church

Rev. Newton Fairweather
700 NW 175TH Street, Miami Gardens
FL 33169
Phone: 305-652-5433

Northwest Dade Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Pastor Victor J. Maddox
Services:
Saturday - 9:30am - Bible Study for all
Saturday - 11:00am - Worship Service
6500 NW 202nd Street
Miami, FL 33015
(305) 625-5630
www.nwdsda.org

Pentecostal Tabernacle

18415 NW 7th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-651-8323

Sierra Norwood Calvary Baptist Church

Rev. Dr. Richard Ledgister
495 NW 191st Street
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-652-7336

Unity Light of The World Church

Rev. Michael Smith, Pastor
Services:
Sundays - 10:45am, Worship Service,
Tuesdays Prayer Group - 7:00pm,
Wednesdays Classes - 7:00pm,
Last Thursdays Healing - 7:00pm
24 Hour Prayer Line: 1-800-669-7729
16800 NW 17th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305-628-2322
Email: church@unitylight.org
Website: www.unitylight.org

Universal Truth Center

Rev. Dr. Mary Tumpkins
21310 NW 37th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33169
Phone: 305- 624-4991

YOU CAN ADD YOUR CHURCH INFORMATION BY EMAIL: LMINTO8881@AOL.COM

SOUTH FLORIDA PICTORIAL

21ST ANNUAL CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL (YEAR OF THE OX)



LION AND DRAGON DANCE
Wing Lung Tai Chi Kung Fu School

DUNHUANG DANCE
Chinese Culture Association of Miami - Lily Dance Club

MAGIC DRAGON ACROBATS

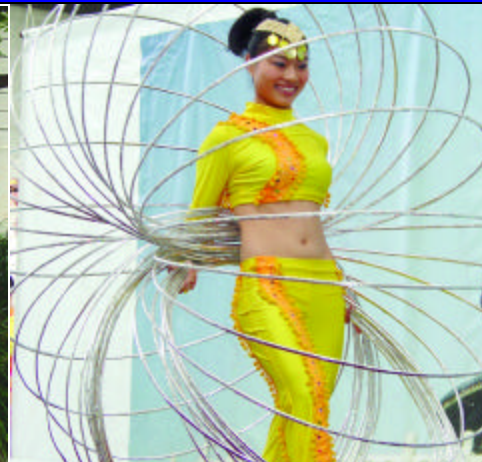


(L-R) AMARA SOHN - NBC6 ,
CONSUL GENERAL (PRC) QIAO HONG,
LISA HU BARQUIST, EVA LEUNG
AND PAT VAN LIU

PETER LIU- PRESIDENT CCF,
MAKING A PRESENTATION TO
BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

JESSICA YAP
VIOLINIST

CONSUL GENERAL (JA), J
ESSICA YAP AND HER MOM
SANDRA GRANT GRIFFITHS, KAYE CHONG AND STAFF
MR. GRANT-GRIFFITHS GEORGE YAP
THIER DAUGHTER SARA



MATSURIZA TAIKO DRUMS

LADIES FROM A SHOWCASE OF CHINA'S
ETHNIC NATIONALITES

MAGIC DRAGON ACROBATS

READ ARTICLE ON PAGE 11

PHOTOS BY TREVOR GRIFFTHS

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ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NEWS

21st Annual Chinese New Year Festival Celebrating the Year of the Ox



The Chinese Cultural Foundation's (CCF) 21st Annual Chinese New Year Festival celebrated the Year of the Ox on Sunday, February 8th, 2009 at the Miami-Dade College, Kendall Campus, 11011 SW 104 Street, Miami.

The festival was held at the family friendly environment of Miami-Dade College, the weather was fantastic and they pulled in a diverse crowd of about 8,000 people.



AUDIANCE



WILFRED & MADELINE LAI AND CONSUL GENERAL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN HOUSTON, QIAO HONG (CENTER)

The Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Houston, Qiao Hong, seems to have become a part of the yearly Festival, as this is her second year in a row. She delivered a great message along with the President of the CCF, Peter Liu to the audience. The Emcees for the show were Amara Sohn - NBC6, Lisa Hu Barquist and Eva Leung.

This year's cultural entertainment was very exciting and magical thanks to their wonderful producer Wilfred Lai, who has been producing the entertainment for the last 20 years.

He had the crowd-pleasing favorites: Wing Lun Tai Chi Kung Fu Lion and Dragon Dance, Magic Dragon Acrobats, Sineolite Entertainment Group and Maturiza Taiko Drums.



The special guest artist at this year's festival was Jessica Yap from Jamaica. Jessica at 15 years old is a classically trained violinist who has successfully crossed-over to jazz, rock and reggae. Her performance was amazing and the crowd loved her. Her attendance was made possible with assistance from Air Jamaica. Last year with very little notice, Jessica was whisked off to Beijing, China to perform at the celebrations honoring Jamaica's success at the 2008 Olympics.

Additional acts were: Harriet Young Dance Ensemble, Jinglu Cao, Mask Changes, Dunhuang Dance, Mandarin Chinese Dance and closing the show was a showcase from China's Ethnic Nationalities. Show times were 12:30 p.m. & 3:30 p.m. and after the shows the crowd sampled the many varieties of food & arts/crafts exhibitors provided by the many vendors. There was also a special area with games and rides for the kids.

A portion of proceeds was donated to Juvenile Diabetes Research, Breast Cancer Research and the Kidney Foundation at the beginning of the performance. Participating organizations included: The Chinese Cultural Association and Organization of Chinese Americans - South Florida Chapter of Chinese Association of Science, Engineering & Culture (CASEC).

The Chinese Cultural Foundation (CCF) wishes to thank their committee, visitors, sponsors, exhibitors, vendors and volunteers for helping to once again pull off a very successful Chinese New Year Festival.

Making the Count Right: Achieving an Accurate 2010 Census for Our Community



OCA-South Florida Chapter

OCA | EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

[Miami, FL - 2009] OCA-South Florida Chapter strongly supports active participation at the upcoming 2010 Census. We need to be counted so our community will receive adequate funding and services.

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 is the one-year out mark for the 2010 census. The CENSUS is coming - and will shape our future for the next 10 years.

The accuracy of the census directly affects our nation's ability to ensure equal representation and equal access to important governmental resources for all Americans. In fact, census data is the basis for determining how \$300 billion per year in federal funds is distributed to state and local governments. This money is used for schools, road systems, healthcare for low-income children, veterans' services and senior nutrition programs, and public services that

benefit our state and our communities.

"Since our community is over 60% immigrant population with high language challenges, we are at greater risk of not getting counted than others, thus leaving our communities with fewer resources," says Winnie Tang, President of OCA-South Florida Chapter. "Therefore, our chapter is urging South Florida's Chinese and Asian communities to participate in 2010 to ensure a fair and accurate census count as one of the most significant civil rights and equal rights issues facing our country today."

Founded in 1973 as Organization of Chinese Americans, OCA, a national Asian Pacific American social justice organization, is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and has over 80 chapters and affiliates around the country. OCA is an official 2010 Census Partner and a Census Information Center. OCA-South Florida Chapter was founded in 1987 and is an official 2010 Census Partner.

GO ONLINE FOR MORE NEWS, INFORMATION AND EVENTS AT
www.miamigardensobserver.com

Calendar of Events

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month 2009
*** Leadership to Meet the Challenges of a Changing World ***

OCA-SFL Excellence Award: 5/2/09

- Bamboo Garden, N Miami Beach

APAMH - 11th Annual Cultural Series: 5/9/2009

- Miramar Branch Library, Miramar

APAMH Concert: Ning An Pianist: 5/15/2009

- Miami Dade County Auditorium

Miss Florida Asia: 7/11/2009

- North Miami Beach Performing Arts Theater

31st Annual OCA National Convention

August 6-9 2009 in San Francisco, CA

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Winnie Tang

Chapter President

OCA - South Florida Chapter

305-753-8791 Cell or Email: WinnieVHTang@aol.com

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SOUTH FLORIDA PICTORIAL & INFORMATION

The 2nd Annual 'TATI Dream Fete' Fundraiser



Transforming America Through Interaction (TATI), Inc.'s upcoming scholarships/events/activities:



In loving memory of Tatiana Renée McIntosh



Ryan Murry - Tati 2008 Scholarship Winner
Scholarships

In support of Caribbean American Heritage Month, TATI, Inc. co-sponsored the Institute of Caribbean Studies' \$500.00 Youth Essay Competition scholarship with the Greater Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce. The winner, Ryan Murray of Coral Reef Senior High School in Miami, was awarded his prize at the UNIFEST 2008 celebration

in Lauderdale Lakes, where members of the CACC participated in the opening flag ceremony and TATI, Inc. had a booth to promote our organization.

TATI, Inc. is in the process of awarding one \$500 Hardship Scholarship for 2008, and has two additional Hardship Scholarships to be awarded for 2009! If you know of anyone who could benefit from the available funds, please refer them to our website for information on how to apply. The application deadline is July 31, 2009.

For additional information regarding the above or any future activities please visit our website at www.taticaribbean.com.

Once again TATI, Inc., would like to thank their supporters for their continued support and confidence in our organization. They look forward to seeing you and new supporter at their next event.

UNsung HEROES MENTORSHIP AWARD NOMINATION FORM

TATI, Inc., is bestowing its Unsung Heroes Mentorship Award to one (1) adult who is working quietly to positively affect the lives of others, whose leadership and service have had a beneficial impact on South Florida's Caribbean American community. TATI, Inc., will award the Unsung Heroes Mentorship Award to the most qualified adult who has not been recognized for their work previously. If you know someone who meets these guidelines and you would like to nominate that person or his/her organization, please complete and return this application no later than Friday, May 1, 2009.

For additional information regarding the above or any future activities please visit our website at www.tati-caribbean.com.

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SOUTH FLORIDA PICTORIAL & INFORMATION

THE CITY OF LAUDERHILL & DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. TASK FORCE PRESENTS 9TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., 2009 CELEBRATION



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HIS WIFE DESAREE SMITH (R)
AND GUEST

SUSAN TAYOR (CENTER IN RED) TRACI CLOYD (HOT 105FM)
TAKING PHOTOS WITH GUEST WITH U.S. STATE REP.
HAZELLE ROGERS

VICE MAYOR H. BENSON JR.
AND LESLIE TROPEPE
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SOUTH FLORIDA CARIBBEAN INFORMATION

Jamaican Diaspora Southern United States Hosts Community Organization Forum - Saturday, March 28, 1pm-4pm



The Consulate General of Jamaica in collaboration with the Jamaican Diaspora Southern United States will host a Community Organization Forum on Saturday, March 28, 2009, 1pm to 4pm, at the Holy Family Episcopal Church, 18501 NW 7th Avenue in Miami Gardens.

Special guest will be Professor Dr. Neville Ying of the Jamaica Diaspora Institute at the Mona School of Business, University of the West Indies, Mona. He will update on the development of the Diaspora Institute in Jamaica, and ongoing community organizing efforts among first and second generation Jamaicans in the Diaspora in the Southern USA. Participants at the forum will include representatives from community organizations, business leaders, media, and concerned citizens. Discussions will continue to focus on the ongoing and

unprecedented community organization in the overseas Diaspora communities, according to Diaspora advisory Board representative to the Southern USA, attorney Marlon Hill. Attendees will learn more about opportunities for collaboration among other organizations. Diaspora representatives from other communities throughout the Southern Region will participate in the forum via technology of the internet and conference call.

For more information or to confirm attendance, call 786-349-2584 or email info@marlonhill.com.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:

Marlon A. Hill, Esq.
Jamaican Diaspora Advisory Board Member
Southern United States Diaspora Hotline: 786-349-2584 in the U.S. or 876-621-0102 in Jamaica
info@marlonhill.com
www.jamaicandiaspora.gov.jm



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The 5th Annual Dennis Ziadie Cup Football Match: St. George's vs Jamaica College at Central Broward Regional Park - April 18th, 2009



Miramar, Florida - The 5th Annual soccer match between the Jamaica College Old Boys Association of Florida and the St. George's College Old Boys Association of Florida for the Dennis Ziadie Trophy, will take place on Saturday April 18th, 2009 at the Central Broward Regional Park, in Lauderhill, Florida. Last year's match drew over 800 spectators and supporters of both schools. The festivities will begin at 1.00 pm.

The annual match is in memory

of Dennis Ziadie, who coached both schools to Manning Cup victories. This year will mark the 23rd year of the death of Dennis Ziadie in a car crash in Mexico at the 1986 World Cup.

"The Ziadie Cup has grown faster than we ever imagined when we started the event. We are expecting close to over 1000 this year," stated Ray Stephenson the president of the Jamaica College Old Boys Association of Florida.

"We believe this is the most fitting way to honor Dennis Ziadie's legacy and what he has done." This year's soccer match is a part of the Jamaica College Old Boys Association "True Blue" weekend festivities which includes a True Blue party on April 17th, 2009 and a True Blue church service on April 19th, 2009. **For more information visit <http://www.jcobaf.org>**

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Jean Powell
Jamaican Speech

Songs and music by
Members of the Jamaican Flok Revue and Tallawah Mento Band

Sophia Nicholson
Jamaican Speech

BCC Library, the Broward Community College and the Jamaican Folk Revue, and their sponsors invited the South Florida Community to the Louise Bennett-Coverley Reading Festival, honoring and studying the life and works of Dr. the Hon. Louise Bennett-Coverley - author, comedienne, social commentator and Jamaica's Cultural Ambassador. Also celebrating the 2nd Annual Birthday of the South Regional /BCC Library in the new LEED certified "Green" building. The event, under the patronage of the Jamaican Consulate General in

Miami, took place at 7300 Pines Blvd (BCC, South Campus). The event was well attended and many of the attendees was surprised at how much there was to still learn about Ms. Lou and the Jamaican language. BCC Library, the Broward Community College and the Jamaican Folk Revue would like to thank all their sponsors, panelists, supporters and all those who attended the event. Walk Good. Donation to the "Hon. Louise Bennett-Coverley Scholarship for the Performing Arts" is still being accepted by the Jamaican Folk Revue (305) 235-8410.

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MIAMI DADE NEWS & INFORMATION

MAYOR CARLOS ALVAREZ UNVEILS 2008 YEAR-END CRIME STATISTICS



Pictured from left to right: Robert Parker, Director, Miami-Dade Police Department; and Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez and Miami-Dade Police Department Director Robert Parker announced the 2008 year-end crime statistics for unincorporated Miami-Dade County, on February 18, 2009, at the Miami-Dade County Police Department Headquarters. Officials announced that crime continues to decline throughout unincorporated Miami-Dade County. Forcible sex offenses are down 16%; motor vehicle thefts are down 9%; burglaries are down 5%; and robberies are down 4% from last year.

"It has been a challenging year, but we are keeping crime in check. In the three areas where a police presence has the highest impact - robberies, burglaries and auto thefts - we

saw reductions. We continue to focus on areas of concern and are using a number of strategies to stay one step ahead of criminals," said Mayor Alvarez.

During the news conference, Mayor Alvarez also revealed the successful results from the Gun Bounty Program, which makes it possible for residents to get a \$1,000 reward for turning in someone with an illegal gun. To date, 266 illegal guns have been seized, which resulted in 165 arrests. The Mortgage Fraud Task Force's efforts, which combines education, legislation and regulation with law enforcement, has resulted in more than 100 arrests. Hundreds more cases are under investigation.

MAYOR MANNY DIAZ PRAISES PRESIDENT OBAMA FOR COMING TO THE AID OF SMALL BUSINESSES



Manuel A. Diaz, Mayor

Miami, FL - Mayor of Miami and U.S. Conference of Mayors President Manny Diaz today praised President Obama's plan to save small businesses through higher loan guarantees, reduced fees and overall expansion of access to capital.

"As we hear of large corporations that lay off thousands of people, it is easy to forget that small businesses are responsible for millions of jobs in every community in America," said Mayor Diaz. "Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and Mayors all over the country have watched as small businesses in their communities shut their doors due to lack of access to capital and through no fault of their own."

In January, the nation's mayors sent a letter to President Obama, Treasury Geithner Secretary and Congress urging for immediate relief



for small businesses in the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) and to express concern about the small businesses in their communities that are unable to borrow the funds they need to keep their businesses operating (www.usmayors.org).

"The mayors of America made a plea calling for financial relief for small businesses and President Obama has responded," added Mayor Diaz. "The President's plan to unlock credit for small businesses will save businesses, allow them to grow, and save and create thousands of jobs."

"This plan shows that the President and his Administration understand the importance of small and businesses in America's MainStreet, which have generated about 70 percent of net new jobs annually over the past decade and for many are the starting point towards the American Dream."

Commissioner Sally A. Heyman Sponsors Exhibit Honoring Women's History Month

MIAMI, FL - In honor of Women's History Month, Commissioner Sally A. Heyman will be sponsoring an exhibit of women's achievements at the Stephen P. Clark Center's East Lobby, 111 NW 1st Street in Miami. The display, which will be up from March 2 to March 30, 2009, will feature photos and descriptions of some of Florida's most notable and influential women.

A portion of photographer Scherley Busch's collection "Florida Women of Achievement" will be on display. Selected portraits include singer Gloria Estefan, historian and author Arva Parks McCabe, environmentalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas, U.S. Representative Carrie Meek, University of Miami President Donna Shalala, Iberia Tiles Chair Rosa Sugrañes, philanthropist Adrienne Arsh, Florida Representative Elaine Bloom, Florida Supreme Court Justice

Barbara Pariente, Florida Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink, journalist Ana Azcuy, and human rights advocate Leona Cooper.

Additionally, the Jewish Museum of Florida is contributing with a display of eight of Florida's most notable women who were pioneers in politics, civil rights, and other fields: May Mann Jennings, Mary McLeod Bethune, Pauline Berman, Rosie Weiss, Mary Barr Munroe, Annie Coleman, Paulina Pedrosa, and Annie Jumper Tommie.

"Women have successfully contributed to Florida's development for decades, and yet many have remained unsung heroes," said Commissioner Heyman. "This is a wonderful opportunity for residents to learn about and be proud of the women who exemplify the best of our community."

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Rebeca Sosa honored during the 21st Annual In The Company of Women Awards Ceremony



Miami-Dade County Commissioner Rebeca Sosa was presented with the Government & Law award during the 21st Annual In the Company of Women Award Ceremony held on the evening of Wednesday, March 4th at the Biltmore Hotel. Jack Kardys, Director of the Miami-Dade Parks & Recreation Department, and Mrs.

Robin Reiter presented the Commissioner with the prestigious accolade for her proven leadership, creativity and vision in addressing community issues in Miami-Dade County.

The event recognized ten (10) local women from various disciplines for their long-standing contributions to the citizens of Miami-Dade County.

For 21 years, Miami-Dade Parks and Recreation has been honoring local women for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the citizens of Miami-Dade County. Women from various professions will be honored in the following categories: Arts & Entertainment, Business and Economics, Communications and Literature, Education and Research, Government and Law, Health and Human Services, Science and Technology, and Sports and Athletics.

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FAMILY FIRST NEWS & INFORMATION

FIVE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED IN THE COLLEGE BOARD'S 'AP REPORT TO THE NATION'

Five Miami-Dade County public schools are among 16 schools across the nation being recognized for increasing access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses among traditionally underserved students. The College Board released their fifth annual "AP Report to the Nation" today. The public schools earned the distinction of having the largest number of African American and/or Hispanic students from the class of 2008 achieving success (a score of 3 or higher) on specific AP Exams.

" Barbara Goleman Senior High School had the largest number of Hispanic students achieving success on the AP Art History Exam.

" Coral Reef Senior High School had the largest number of Hispanic students achieving success on the AP English Language, AP English Literature, and AP European History Exams.

" Design and Architecture Senior High School had the largest number of African American and Hispanic students achieving success on the AP Studio Art Exam.

" Miami Killian Senior High School had the largest number of Hispanic students achieving success on the AP Human Geography Exam.

" Miami Palmetto Senior High School had the largest number of Hispanic students achieving success on the AP Environmental Science Exam.

AP prepares students for college success and helps offset college costs. Research shows that AP students are much more likely to earn a bachelor's degree in four years than their peers. Participation and success in AP courses also helps students qualify for college scholarships.

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. The College Board's AP program offers 37 courses and exams and provides students with the opportunity to take college-level courses and earn college credit or placement, while still in high school.

MIAMI-DADE 4-H YOUTH PROGRAM CELEBRATES 100 YEARS AT THE YOUTH FAIR



Miami-Dade 4-H member Stephanie Poole, age 11, presents her project at the Youth Fair in this file photo from 2008.

The Miami-Dade 4-H Youth Program will be celebrating its 100th anniversary at the Miami-Dade County Fair & Expo Center, 10901 Coral Way (SW 24 Street) in the E. Darwin Fuchs Pavilion, on Saturday, March 28 at 12:30 p.m. To commemorate the event, there will be a fashion and talent show, public speaking presentations and more than 1,500 student exhibits on display. The exhibits include holiday and home decorations, creative writing samples, photos, sewn garments, baked goods and other arts and crafts.

A record number of 4-H members have signed up to participate in the 58th year of the Miami-Dade County Youth Fair, with a total of 225 students registered. During this year's fashion show, participants will receive special modeling instructions and hair-styling tips courtesy of a local modeling agency. 4-H participants will also showcase their sewing skills by creating different types of garments, such as sports wear and formal wear.

Participants are eligible to win ribbons in the different categories and

as much as \$100 in prize money. In the past, "4-Hers" have used this money to help pay for 4-H summer camp and personal computers.

Over the last 100 years, the 4-H Youth Program in Miami has expanded its focus from agricultural education to include technology, marine science, healthy life-styles, and finance as it keeps pace with the changing needs of society. However, the 4-H program remains successful by providing the same fun, hands-on and "learn-by-doing" approach. Its club-setting fosters relationships with caring adult leaders and increases life skills in public speaking, leadership and citizenship. More than 9,000 4-H members, ages 5 through 18, are enrolled in Miami-Dade County.

4-H is a volunteer-led youth development program managed by Miami-Dade Cooperative Extension, a partnership of the Miami-Dade Consumer Services Department and the University of Florida. For more information on the 4-H program, visit <http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/4h>.

100th Anniversary Scout Mobile Tour Stopping here on March 23



The official 100th Anniversary Scout Mobile went to Miami Lakes Scout office on Monday, March 23 at 10:00am. They arrived in the morning and stayed until 8:30 pm. They presented a special "Century of Values" mural that is now displayed at the Scout office. There was special patches sold as well other Boy Scout items.

The Boy Scout office had a good crowd to receive them as they arrive. For more information, visit their site: <http://www.acenturyofvalues.org/>

MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR COLLEGE BOUND STUDENTS

Community Action Agency's Community Advisory Committees are providing applications for scholarships to assist low-income students attending college.

The Miami-Dade Community Action Agency's (CAA) Community Advisory Committees (CAC) are accepting applications for educational scholarships in the amount of \$1,500, to assist individuals between the ages of 16-25 in reaching their educational goals. To qualify, candidates must be currently enrolled in a college or vocational institution or be accepted by a college or vocational institution for the Fall session. The individual must reside within the boundaries of any of the sixteen target areas represented by a CAC, and the annual household income cannot exceed 125% of the Health and Human Services Poverty Income Guidelines. The CAC target

areas include the communities of Little Havana, Allapattah, Brownsville, Coconut Grove, Culmer, Edison/Little River, Florida City, Goulds, Hialeah, Liberty City, Naranja, Opa-Locka, Perrine, South Beach, South Miami and Wynwood.

Applicants must have at least a "C" average to quality. Other criteria considered for selection includes community service and employment during the candidate's junior or senior year of high school.

Individuals interested in applying for the scholarship may obtain an application at any of the Miami-Dade Community Service Centers, or may download the application and requirements from the County web portal at www.miamidade.gov/caa/citizen_participation.asp. For additional information about the Scholarship program, please call 786-469-4600.

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LIBERTY CITY & OVER TOWN NEWS

Chairman Moss' Press Conference Generates \$50,000 for The Liberty City Shootings Crime Stoppers Reward Fund

On Thursday, January 29, 2009, Chairman Dennis C. Moss held a press conference to announce that the reward amount for information leading up to the arrest/s of the suspect/s responsible for the recent Liberty City shootings went up to \$50,000. Commissioners Dorrin D. Rolle, Audrey M. Edmonson, and Barbara J. Jordan joined Chairman Moss to explore the community to come forward with information. Commissioners Katy Sorenson, Carlos A. Gimenez, and Rebeca Sosa were also present in support of their colleagues. Members of the Florida State delegation also expressed their concern and pleaded for residents who may have information to reveal it as soon as possible. Miami-Dade Police Director Robert Parker and Crime Stoppers Executive Director Richard Masten stressed their commitment to finding the person responsible for this terrible crime.

"We offer our condolences to the family of the victims and we want them to know that we are united as a community and that these constant and senseless killings have got to stop!" stated Chairman Moss who has hosted numerous anti-crime rallies in neighborhoods throughout his commission district.

From their discretionary funds, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos A. Alvarez, Chairman Moss, and Commissioner Rolle donated \$7,500 to Crime Stoppers reward fund. Commissioner Edmonson donated \$5,000 and Commissioner Jordan \$7,000, increasing the reward amount to \$50,000 as Comp USA and a federal agency who did not want to be recognized came up with the difference.

Brandon Mills, 16, and Derrick Gloster, 18, were killed when someone fired a barrage of bullets into a crowd on a Liberty City corner on January 23. "We know that somebody saw or knows something," exclaimed Commissioner Rolle. It was in his district where the tragedy occurred. On January 28, both

he and Commissioner Edmonson went door to door and handed out prepaid postage cards to Liberty City residents so they could mail in tips about the shooting, or any other criminal activity, anonymously. "The no snitch policy must end," declared Edmonson. "We are in the beginning of a new era, let's act like it and let's stop the black on black crime."

"For the last three years I have been trying to get the U.S. Congress to reinstate the federal weapons ban," said Commissioner Jordan. The state representatives present affirmed their support to ban assault weapons.

Detectives believe the Liberty City gunman/men used an AK-47, a weapon designed for warfare. "On September 12, 2004, police officer Kenya Hubert was shot and killed with an assault weapon, just a day before the ban expired," added Parker. "On September 13, 2007, Officer Jose Somohano was also killed with a high-powered firearm."

"Today, I tell the family or friends of the perpetrator/s to urge them to go to their pastor or priest and turn themselves in," stressed Commissioner Jordan. "You or your child could be the next victim."

"Thirty-five agencies are looking for the suspect/s," added Director Parker. "You will be apprehended."

Crime Stoppers Executive Director Richard Masten reiterated that for the past 28 years callers' identities are zealously protected. "Callers are given 'tip' numbers that they can later use to anonymously collect a reward. We don't ask for your name and can't even tell where you're calling from," Masten added. "We don't have Caller I.D."

Anyone with information is asked to please call Miami-Dade Crime Stoppers at (305) 471-TIPS.

Commissioner Spence-Jones Says Jobs Should Be # 1 Priority



Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones

City of Miami Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones cast her vote for the Marlins Stadium because of two important factors: 1) to ensure that the promises and commitments made to Overtown/Park West by the City and County are kept and 2) that businesses and residents in her district benefit from the project during construction and throughout the life of the stadium's operation.

The Marlins agreed to support these principles by amending the agreement to include: a minimum of 50 percent of jobs for City of Miami and Dade County residents; union participation that includes apprenticeship programs and training; support for small businesses and contractors; support for City parks and youth programs; and penalties that will go into a trust fund to benefit small businesses and youth programs.

"I am extremely happy with the outcome of today's meeting; three weeks ago I would not have supported the baseball stadium because it did not benefit the residents of my



district and the City of Miami. Today I can truly say that based on the Marlins stepping up to the plate and amending the agreement, that the building of the baseball stadium will truly benefit the community."

Over the last three weeks Commissioner Spence-Jones has met with several community stakeholders, city and county officials, organized laborers, the Marlins organization, small contractors and her constituents to address the issues and concerns with the agreement.

"Our building industry is on its death bed, our unemployment rate is out of control and our families are hurting. The baseball stadium provides a stimulus to job creation and this is about jobs, jobs, and jobs," said Commissioner Spence-Jones "A deal of this nature is not perfect and voting to approve this project does not insure that it will happen. There are multiple challenges that this project faces but it is one of many major construction projects ready to move forward to employ some of our unemployed workers and struggling small businesses".

Commissioner Audrey M. Edmonson Contributes to Historic Bayside Sign Project



On Saturday, February 21, 2009, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Audrey M. Edmonson participated in a fundraising kick-off at Baywood Park, in the historic neighborhood of Bayside, in the Upper East Side in District 3. Commissioner Edmonson contributed to the Historic Bayside Sign Project, which will go toward the creation of a Historic Bayside sign on the NE 69th Street

median entrance off Biscayne Boulevard. The commissioner (pictured above to the right) gives her contribution to Louis Bordeaux, President of the Bayside Residents' Association. The event also featured a raffle and music for attendees, as well as the opportunity for nearby residents to learn more about starting a crime watch in their neighborhoods.

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OPA-LOCKA COMMUNITY NEWS

OPA-LOCKA MAYOR KELLEY SWORN-IN AS PRESIDENT MIAMI-DADE BLACK CAUCUS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS



Opa-locka Mayor Joseph L. Kelley (President of MDBC-LEO) at podium



Photo 1 - left to right
 Councilman Prospero Herrera from Miami Shores
 Opa-locka Commissioner Rose Tydus
 Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson
 City of N. Miami Vice Mayor Jacque Despinossee
 Opa-locka Mayor Joseph L. Kelley
 Vice Mayor Barbara Watson of Miami Garden(2nd Vice President of the MDBC-LEO)
 Councilman Melvin Bratton Miami Gardens

Opa-locka, FL Monday, February 9, 2009 Opa-locka Mayor Joseph L. Kelley and Commissioner Dorothy "Dottie" Johnson were among the officers sworn-in at the inception of the Miami-Dade Black Caucus of Local Elected Official (MDBC-LEO), at the First Annual Installation Gala held at Miami Dade Community College, North Campus at 8:00 p.m.

The MDBC-LEO consists of approximately 25 committed members of Black Elected Officials from all over Miami-Dade County, with an anticipated increase in membership due to the interest which followed directly after the installation ceremony. Although he was attributed as the visionary for the local organization, Mayor Kelley stated that several Black officials saw the need, but his willingness to step to the forefront

resulted in establishing the chapter in the latter part of 2008. On this night, Mayor Kelley took the oath of office to serve as President, along with Commissioner Johnson, who was sworn in as the Secretary/Treasurer. Officers will serve for a term of one year, during which time meetings on the fourth Monday of every month will be held at Town Center, 780 Fisherman Street, 2nd Floor, Opa-locka Florida, at 6:30 p.m.

The primary goals of Mayor Kelley this year, will consist of getting the MDBC off to a running start by setting policies, laying the foundation through technology on the internet, reaching out to businesses for support, recruiting membership and promoting participation.

Kelley stated that the local chapter of the Black Caucus is modeled after the State and National Organization, therefore will operate in

the Spirit of Excellence. According to Leo E. Longworth, President of the Florida Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, "Organizations such as ours are created to discuss diverse perspectives and formulate solutions to critical domestic issues confronting the African American Communities." Kelley added that during the embryonic stages, "There is much to accomplish, but before my presidential term is completed, I would like to establish scholarships, schedule summits and develop programs to mentor the young people in our community that are interested in Public Service."

Looking forward to the work ahead, Kelley stated, "We welcome volunteers, and we are recruiting anyone committed addressing the issues in the African-America community." One issue he specifically cited as "a serious problem in our neighborhoods, and is in need of immediate attention, is the use of AK47s." He noted, "On issues of this

Opa-locka Commissioner Dorothy "Dottie" Johnson (Secretary/Treasure of MDBC-LEO)
 Opa-locka Vice Mayor Myra L. Taylor
 Dade-County School Board Member - Wilbert T. Holloway

magnitude, through a collaborated effort, the Black Elected Officials will have a greater impact as a unified voice... and where there is unity, there is strength."

Keynote Speaker for the Installation Gala was former Commissioner and Vice Mayor of the City of Ft. Lauderdale Carlton B Moore, whose message on "The Impact of Black Politics in Miami-Dade County" was befitting to the launching of the organization and the collective goals it hopes to obtain throughout African-American Communities in South Florida. Hosting the event was Opa-locka's Commissioner Rose Tydus. **Information Provided by Christina Gordon, Media Coordinator City of Opa-locka**

Commissioner Dorrin D. Rolle Meets with Haitian Officials in Port-au-Prince



(L-R) Miami-Dade County Commissioner Dorrin D. Rolle, Haitian President Rene Garcia Preval, Pasteur Erol Julien; and Senate President, Kelly Bastien.

MIAMI, FL - Commissioner Dorrin D. Rolle visited Port-au-Prince, Haiti on February 20, 2009 to meet with some of the island's government officials and determine how Miami-Dade County may be able to assist Haiti. In the last year, the country was faced with several crises, including riots over skyrocketing food prices and natural disasters that destroyed homes and killed many islanders.

Commissioner Rolle spoke with Haitian President Rene Garcia Preval, Prime Minister Michele Duvivier Pierre-Louis, and Minister of Public Health & Population Alex Larsen about helping Haiti develop a hurricane preparedness plan. "The four storms that hit Haiti last hurricane season absolutely devastated the island," said Commissioner Rolle. "There were hundreds left dead and thousands more left without shelter, food, or clean water. With Miami-Dade's experience in hurricane preparedness, we can help Haiti implement proactive measures that can get people out of harm's way and anticipate necessary services to address the aftermath."

The commissioner also visited a

Food for the Poor facility where Haitians in need can go to receive food for themselves and their families. Commissioner Rolle was able to distribute food to visitors who attended the facility. The center feeds thousands of Haitians daily.

Commissioner Rolle has been an advocate for providing humanitarian aid to Haiti. Last September, in collaboration with renowned Haitian musician, Sweet Micky, he hosted the successful "HELP FOR HAITI" concert in Miami, which attracted more than 9,000 attendees and collected enough food and supplies for the island to fill two (2) 40-foot shipping container, as well as more than \$30,000 in monetary contributions.

"I am thankful to be able to join with Commissioner Rolle in a way that would positively impact Haitians in Miami and at home," said Sweet Micky.

"Miami-Dade has strong ties to Haiti and we should do all that we can to ensure that its residents are getting the basic of human needs," said the commissioner.

City of Opa-locka, First to Rename Avenue President Barack Obama, on President's Day

Opa-locka, FL - First, "change" transpired at the White House with the swearing-in of the 44th President of the United States, and now it will occur in the City of Opa-locka, on February 16, 2009 at 9:00 AM, after a unanimous decision resulting from a resolution sponsored by Commissioner Dorothy "Dottie" Johnson, making Opa-locka the first city in the nation to pay tribute to President Barack Obama by renaming an Avenue in his honor.

The City of Opa-locka, in partnership with South Florida Communities, will kick-off the street renaming ceremony with an electrifying parade, which will include actress, and former Opa-locka native, Jo Marie Payton of the hit ABC series "Family Matters" as the Grand Marshall, along with many other celebrity guest and prominent dignitaries.

As the City of Opa-locka prepares for the national and international exposure that will accompany a celebration of this magnitude, it is requested that all businesses, organizations,

groups and individuals wishing to participate in the parade, contact the City Clerks office at (305) 953-2800 for the registration form. The application deadline is Tuesday, February 10, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. It is also imperative that vendors, hoping to reserve a space for the event, do so with respect to the same timeline. Identification badges will be distributed in advance for prime media booth locations. Therefore, we encourage you to contact us NOW!

The parade will be followed by a brief program, then the anticipated sign unveiling renaming Pervis to President Barack Obama Avenue, after which the commemoration will culminate into an afternoon of food, fun and festivities for the entire family. As we continue to set precedent in the "Great" City of Opa-locka, come celebrate with us and other South Florida Communities, on the newly renamed President Barack Obama Avenue. Once again, you'll be among the FIRST!

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The Dream House Raffle drawing will be held at Goulds Park on Saturday, May 16, 2009 at 1 o'clock pm

Not actual photo of home. Artist Rendering.
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This house is not a government sponsored or government owned home. It was built by Goulds CDC after purchasing the land from a local private owner. The money to build the house was obtained from Home Equity Mortgage. The purpose of this raffle is to raise funds to fund its charitable operations. GCDC is an IRS designated 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation and all funds raised will be used for the continuation of its affordable housing, economic programs and various capital development projects. Pursuant to Florida Statute 849.0935 which governs charitable, nonprofit organizations, drawings by chance; require disclosures. Therefore, Goulds CDC makes the follow statement for the public record. *The Goulds Community Development Corporation Dream House Raffle is a fundraising event and Goulds CDC is not requiring a purchase or contribution in order to participate.* Since this is a fundraising event Goulds CDC is requesting a donation of one hundred fifty dollars per entry ticket to support the charitable activities of Goulds CDC. The Dream House Raffle begins on Monday, February 9, 2009 and ends on Saturday, May 9, 2009. The Dream House Raffle drawing will be held at Goulds Park on Saturday, May 16, 2009 at 1 o'clock pm. Void where prohibited by law.

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 May 28th, 2009
 June 25th, 2009

July 23rd, 2009
 August 20th, 2009
 September 24th, 2009
 October 22nd, 2009

*November 19th, 2009

*Special session will be held in light of Thanksgiving holiday. For more information (305) 635-2301

AUTO

TIPS FOR BUYING USED CARS



1) **Shop for newer used cars that still have at least a portion of their original manufacturer's warranty remaining:** Most late model used cars have at least three-year/36,000 mile basic warranty coverage (and often longer "powertrain" coverage on the engine and transmission). This means you'll get at least a year or so of peace of mind if you buy a used car that is less than three years old. (Important: Be sure to confirm the used car warranty is fully transferable.)

2) **Check into Certified, Pre-Owned (CPO) vehicles:** These are late model used cars and trucks that typically have less than 50,000 miles and have been given multipoint inspections -- with any needed service or upkeep taken care of before the used car is put on the lot. CPO programs are backed by the automakers (Ford, GM, Volvo, etc.) and the vehicles often include a no-cost extended warranty on major parts such as the engine and transmission. CPO used cars are usually clean and well-maintained -- the "cream puffs" of the used car market.

3) Do a "background check" for indications that the particular used car make/model you are considering might be a problem car: One with an unusual record of either recalls or consumer complaints. You can find information about recalls and safety-related defects at the National

Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Web site (www.nhtsa.dot.gov), and information about consumer satisfaction at JD Power & Associates (see www.jdpower.com/cc/index.jsp). Consumer Reports is another good place to poke around (go to www.consumerreports.org/main/home.jsp and click on "autos"). It's also a very good idea to do a simple Google or Yahoo! Web search; just type in the make and model of the vehicle and "lemon." You can bet if the car has a history of problems, there will be complaints all over the Internet.

4) **Ask to see the used cars' service records:** If these are available, it's usually a good sign the car was well cared-for, and perhaps more importantly, proof (if the records are complete) that there weren't any unusual repairs or prob-

lems. If the used car records are not available, you should be suspicious. It doesn't necessarily mean the used car is a bad car, but you have to wonder why the seller would not have kept such a strong selling point as evidence of proper upkeep and maintenance. In such a case, it is doubly important to have a mechanic you trust give the used car a thorough once-over before you commit to buy.

5) Lastly, jot down the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN): Located on a stamped plate on the top of the used cars dashboard, and run a CARFAX Vehicle History report to check for used car deal-killers such as evidence of a prior accident, odometer fraud, manufacturer "buy back" (a lemon) and so on. A CARFAX report costs less than \$25, and is well worth the expense.

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ENTERTAINMENT & TRAVEL

Mary J. Blige to Make Big-Screen Debut in Tyler Perry Film



Jason Kempin, Getty Images

The Hollywood Reporter states that Mary J. Blige will make her big-screen debut in Tyler Perry's 'I Can Do Bad All By Myself.'

The cast already includes Taraji P. Henson, Gladys Knight, Brian J. White and Marvin Winans. The film is about an alcoholic jazz singer forced to take care of her deceased sister's three children. Blige will play a nightclub manager and singer who is good friends with Taraji P. Henson's character.

The project began shooting March 16 at Perry's newly opened studio complex in Atlanta.

'Bad,' which features Perry's Madea character, is set for release Sept. 11.

While she has guest starred on a few television shows, such as 'The Jamie Foxx Show,' 'Ghost Whisperer,' and HBO's 'Entourage,' Blige's only film credit is the 2001 independent film 'Prison Song,' which was directed by Darnell Martin ('Cadillac Records') and co-starred rapper Q-Tip.

Blackvoice.com

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Movies & DVDs



Now Playing In Theaters

Race to Witch Mountain

Opening date: 03/27/2009

Starring: Dwayne Johnson, AnnaSophia Robb, Alexander Ludwig, Carla Gugino, Ciaran Hinds
Directed By: Andy Fickman
Released By: Walt Disney Pictures
Run Time: 99 min.

Genre: Action
Rating: PG-13 *** (Three Star)
Synopsis: Walt Disney Pictures resurrects one of their time-honored franchises with Race to Witch Mountain, a family-oriented sci-fi adventure that tells the story of two alien visitors (AnnaSophia Robb and Alexander Ludwig) whose search for their spacecraft.



Coming to Theaters

Monsters vs. Aliens

Opening date: 03/27/2009

Starring: Reese Witherspoon, Hugh Laurie, Seth Rogen, Will Arnett, Kiefer Sutherland
Directed By: Conrad Vernon, Rob Letterman

Released By: Dream Works
Run Time: 90 mins
Genre: Animation, Family
Rating: PG-13 *** (Three Star)
Synopsis: DreamWorks Animation entertains moviegoers like never before by fully immersing them into the story with InTru 3D. When California girl Susan Murphy is unexpectedly clobbered by a meteor full of outer space gunk, she mysteriously grows to 49-feet-11-inches tall and is instantly labeled as a "monster" named Ginormica.

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Perform: The challenge of auditioning. The rush of being onstage. A star could be born- who just might be you! The American Idol Experience provides select Guests with an opportunity to audition and sing onstage!

And if your audience votes you the best singer of the day at The

American Idol Experience finale show, you will receive a Dream Ticket (see eligibility restrictions below). If you are eligible to use the Dream Ticket, you will have an opportunity to make a reservation to sing in front of an American Idol* representative at an actual regional audition of the American Idol TV show, where it's your moment to shine!

Please see the following for further details and other important information:

Dream Ticket recipients must satisfy AMERICAN IDOL* TV program requirements in effect at time of use, such as age and residency (as of October, 2008, only ages 16-28 and U.S. citizens or legal permanent U.S. residents eligible to work full-time in U.S.). Dream Ticket does not include travel, meals, lodging or other expenses. **Visit the American Idol Experience website!**

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SOUTH FLORIDA COMMUNITY NEWS

Visionz Marketing Inc. and TriniJungle Juice Set the Tone for 2009 with landmark Business Collaboration

Leading Marketing Solutions Firm Partners with Premier Entertainment Web Portal to enhance their client's message

Miami-February 2009-Leading marketing and advertising firm, Visionz Marketing, Inc. and TriniJungleJuice have joined forces in what appears to be one of the biggest power moves setting the tone for 2009 in the Caribbean community. The collaboration of these two powerhouse companies will undeniably impact the landscape of the Caribbean market in a tremendous way.

With Visionz Marketing, Inc. at the forefront of new innovative marketing practices for the Caribbean market and TriniJungleJuice positioned as the premiere internet entertainment sector, well deserved attention and awareness to the Caribbean market will be placed.

"The coming together of our companies ensures the services we provide is never compromised and our client's expectation is always met. We will handle the sales and advertisement for TriniJungle Juice in the United

States market. We are excited about this business venture", states Visionz Marketing, Inc. CEO, Asa Sealy.

TriniJungle Juice is a unique site that explores the music and culture of the Caribbean. With coverage on Carnival, soca, reggae, dancehall, meringue, bachatta and salsa, TriniJungleJuice has their hand on the latest trends, tastemakers and events that happen in the Caribbean community. Known for their charismatic and passionate local correspondents throughout the states and islands and their cutting edge technology that projects information globally. TriniJungleJuice has definitely tapped into the personal grassroots arena that sets them apart from other entertainment web portals.

To contact
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City of Miami Parks Plans a Basketful of Easter Events for Miami Residents



April 3, 2009 - Family Hippy Hoppity "Egg"citement - 6pm - 9pm, \$3
Shenandoah Park, 1800 SW 21 Avenue, (305) 856-9551

April 4, 2009 - Woodstock Hippy Easter 10am - 2pm, \$3
Morningside Park, 750 NE 55 Terrace, (305) 754-1242

April 11, 2009 - Hadley Easter Festival 12pm - 4pm, \$2
Hadley Park, 1300 NW 50 Street, (305)634-5791

April 11, 2009 - Clemente Easter Bash 10am - 2pm, Free
Clemente Park, 101 NW 34th St., (305)573-6133

April 11, 2009 - Grapeland's Easter Jamboree 4pm - 8pm, \$5
Grapeland Park, 1550 NW 37 Avenue, (305) 960-2960

April 18, 2009 - Easter "Egg"stravaganza 10am - 2pm, Free
Margaret Pace Park, 1775 N. Bayshore Drive (305) 350-7938

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